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ABSTRACT

A two-phase attendance alert intervention system was field tested within the fifth grades of two elementary schools, the tenth grades of two high schools, and within grades nine through twelve in a continuation high school. The schools, in four different Los Angeles County unified school districts, vary by socioeconomic patterns and school system administrative organization. The first phase, parent notification, involved the following steps: (1) a phone call on the third consecutive day of unexcused absence, (2) a letter on the fifth consecutive day, (3) a letter on the tenth day of consecutive absence requesting a conference, and (4) a home visit after twelve to fifteen days of continued absence. The second phase became operable on the students' return to school. Counselors contacted the returning pupils and appropriate adjustments were made, including such measures as class changes, program changes, school transfer, psychological testing, and medical referral. In the elementary schools the first step of the intervention system was so successful that the other three steps were obviated. In the secondary schools the four step intervention program materially reduced nonillness absence. (MLF)

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM FOR THE REDUCTION OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCES IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the practicum was to determine whether a system which identifies with minimal time delay those students with excessive unexcused absence patterns and which provides interventions will reduce such absences within districts having diverse socio-economic patterns, within differing school system administrative organizations, and within differing school-age groups. The system tested in the practicum was a more sophisticated version of an earlier computerized attendance alert system which previously had been tried in a single high school. This attendance intervention version was designed to provide prompt identification of pupils exhibiting non-illness absence attendance patterns and to initiate sequenced intervention processes involving parents and school personnel.

It was installed in schools having no computer support -- two elementary schools, two senior high schools, and a continuation high school. The system was field tested during the second semester of the 1974-75 school year within the fifth grades of the elementary schools, the tenth grades of the high schools, and within grades 9 through 12 in the continuation high school.

Results of the trials indicated that in the elementary schools the first step of the intervention system was so successful that the other three steps were obviated. In the

secondary schools the four step intervention program materially reduced non-illness absence with a resultant savings in apportionment loss.

INTRODUCTION

Formation of Task Force

As a result of the success of a practicum in reducing non-illness absence conducted by one cluster member[1] in a high school in the Los Angeles area, several members of the same sub-cluster expressed interest in testing the hypothesis that such a system would produce beneficial results within districts having diverse socio-economic patterns, within differing school system organizations, and within differing school-age groups. To conduct such a study, a task force was organized which was comprised of:

1. A director of instructional services
2. A coordinator of a student executive intern program
3. A director of special services
4. A director of continuation education
5. A director of pupil personnel services

Four different school districts were represented in the task force membership. The districts had the following characteristics:

District 1 was the third largest unified district of the 41 unified districts in the Los Angeles County, had 30,000 pupils enrolled, had a 90 percent black school population.

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[1]John J. Grady, "Development of a Computerized Attendance Alert System," a midi practicum submitted July 20, 1974.

District 2 was an elementary district located in the prestigious Santa Barbara area, was a district of mostly white middle to upper-middle class pupils, had 6,400 pupils enrolled.

District 3, a high school district, served the lush San Joaquin Valley of California, had 2,800 pupils enrolled with 55 percent of the pupils having Spanish surnames.

District 4 was a small unified urban district, had 9,000 pupils enrolled, was rapidly changing racially from white to Black and Mexican-American.

The task force members decided there was sufficient variety within their respective districts that the requirements of the hypothesis could be fulfilled.

Statement of Hypothesis

The hypothesis arrived at by the task force was: "A system which identifies with minimal time delay those students with excessive unexcused absence patterns and which provides interventions will reduce such absences within districts having diverse socio-economic patterns, within differing school system organizations, and within differing school-age groups."

The task force then surveyed how several districts were attacking the problem and reviewed the literature on reduction of non-illness absence.

SURVEY OF PRESENT PRACTICES

Introduction

According to Campbell, absenteeism for non-medical reasons in California schools is at a higher rate than at any other time in history, in spite of the

> development of exemplary instructional programs, highly trained instructional staff, in-school student counseling programs, special education programs, continuation education programs, opportunity classes for 7th and 8th grade students, now emerging alternative school programs for divergent youth, and a society that has less per capita want than any other in our history.[1]

Throughout the State of California, "the problem appears to be the same -- a burgeoning absenteeism rate."[2]

Primary causes for non-school attendance were listed by Campbell as "ineffective parenting, disintegrating family units, challenging of the schools as a viable social institution by adults and young people, earlier emancipation by society of young people and a lack of community."[3] Morris supported this view when he observed that the student who tends to unexcused absences is "less inclined to accept parental order or explanation and more inclined to accept the tenets of his youth culture."[4]

Results of Conference With Consultant

As a first step in addressing this problem, the task force interviewed Mr. James Milner, Consultant in Child

Welfare and Attendance for the Los Angeles County Schools, California. He stated that he knew of no district in Los Angeles County having comprehensive plans to reduce unexcused absences. He subsequently met with the task force to give suggestions to the members that might prove helpful in making the completed practicum useful for dissemination by the Los Angeles County Schools Office.

Responses to Letters of Inquiry

Several districts replied to letters of inquiry concerning how they handled unexcused absenteeism. Detailed names and addresses are listed in the Bibliography.

1. Shasta County, Redding, California

   "We have not really dealt with new intervention programs in this area."

2. Marin County, Corte Madera, California

   "We have no material available."

3. Denver Public Schools, Denver, Colorado

   Our school system is continuing to look for alternative programs which will have some holding aspects. For example, store front schools for junior high school students, with flexible, smaller classes, etc. Some of our social workers are also instrumental in organizing the entire faculties, utilizing positive reinforcement, in an attempt to improve attendance patterns.

4. Mendocino County Schools, Ukiah, California

The Superintendent, Mr. Delsol, referred the inquiry to Mendo-Lake Youth Project which provides truancy intervention, "as one function in our total effort to prevent juvenile delinquency in Lake and Mendocino Counties." The project, with school-referred clients, tries to "head 'em off" before students must go to the School Attendance Review Board or into the justice system.

> The disciplinarians in the schools we serve say there ought to be one of us at least in each school, i.e., a school social worker. We are, however, para-professionals. And, have, in fact, one of us to every 8 - 10 schools . . .

The project director was suggesting at the time of inquiry a High-School-Without-Walls concept which would work out a curriculum for each youth admitted, perhaps a combination of tutoring, work experience, and counseling.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The next step in addressing the problem was a review of the literature concerning efforts being made through plans which included total school personnel efforts, home visitations, and change in curriculum.

Total School Personnel Efforts

Total school personnel efforts mentioned in the literature included students taking responsibility for their own attendance; teachers and counselors employing individual and group counseling; attendance counselors working with school staff, family, and community agencies; and a team approach of pupil services workers.

Students were encouraged to help themselves in a report from Michigan.

> A "no excuse necessary" policy has sharply reduced absenteeism in a Michigan high school, reported McCullogh. Students watch their own attendance, cannot exceed 12 absences without losing course credit, and do not need to bring a written excuse for absence.[5]

Before this procedure went into effect, official attendance was taken only once a day. Now each teacher fills out a form letter upon a student's third, seventh, and twelfth absences, copies of which are mailed to parents.

According to Superintendent of the Ferndale District, John J. Houghton, absenteeism has been reduced by half.

> Teachers report that kids express great concern now in getting to class and getting there on time. And no longer are parents reporting that they don't know their children are skipping school.[6]

The above-described plan would be illegal in the State of California.

Teachers and counselors should play a major role with students vis-a-vis absenteeism, Morris advised. Teachers should make every possible effort to build personal relationships with students, he continued, especially male teachers who can provide a necessary father figure. When teachers note vague sickness reports or feeble excuses, they should refer students who use such devices to counselors.[7] A report by Gaetz on a study which evaluates group counseling suggested that attendance and achievement of students identified as truants and underachievers are significantly improved by both individual and group counseling.[8]

In Ontario, the truant officer has been replaced by the Attendance Counselor who works with students, parents, the educational system, and the community. Truancy is a symptom of many social and psychological problems: economic deprivation, social and family problems, emotional disturbances. The Attendance Counselor must refer those students whose problems are symptomatic of larger problems

to proper treatment and diagnostic facilities, according to Cochrane.[9] "Problems of attendance are total school problems involving the teacher, the counselor, the administrator. Until there is recognition of this, the problem will persist and worsen," wrote Campbell.[10]

He observed further that the Child Welfare and Attendance Specialist should examine, "in concert with the school staff, curriculum and general school policy changes that are thought to affect student attendance"; work "with teachers to effect attitudinal change toward their responsibility relative to school attendance", consult "with the school staff and other support personnel as to new programs that would have greater holding power for certain groups of students"; develop "with the community and parents more positive attitudes toward public education."[11]

Gamsky reported that in a Wisconsin pupil services program, he found that a team approach was more effective in reducing absenteeism than the isolated pupil service worker approach. Children

> improved significantly in achievement, personal adjustment, and attendance with amount of improvement contingent on length of time the child was receiving pupil services.[12]

> Pupils in experimental schools demonstrated a significant reduction in absences as compared with pupils in control schools over a period of the three year duration of the program.[13]

Home Visitations and Change in Curriculum

Home visitations and change in curriculum as techniques in reducing absenteeism were reviewed.

In their book, School, Family, and Neighborhood, which discussed the effectiveness of school authority, Litwak and Meyer suggested caution in the use of home calls.

> Sending a truant officer or a principal to tell parents what they must do is a more aggressive procedure than sending a note to them about a situation or asking them to come to the school to discuss it. The first procedure gives the family much less option to alter its behavior on its own decision, but it does provide the formal authority with much more opportunity to observe what is going on. It may place the family in the difficult position of feeling spied on and coerced, thereby discouraging cooperation.[14]

New York's School-Home Contact Program sent paraprofessionals familiar with the community into the homes of students who showed serious problems in attendance, adjustment, or achievement. The findings by Erickson and others allowed them to infer tentatively that over a four-month period of time the program positively affected absenteeism.[15] A major conclusion of the study was that lower absenteeism has been associated with the School-Home Program and that parents valued the contact for themselves and their children.[16]

The Philadelphia Edison Project attempted to reduce dropout rate and increase average daily attendance through the establishment of an annex to Edison High School for

reduction of class size in self-contained classrooms. Home contacts, remediation in basic skills, career development, work-stipend positions, health care, and food services were offered.[17] Resultant average daily attendance (ADA) in the experimental group compared favorably with the control group. Contact with the homes, Fishman and Edwards reported, in the Philadelphia study, was an important factor in raising ADA.[18] Whenever the student was absent three days, a staff member would call or visit the home. This led to a feeling that the staff cared about the student and was probably a factor in increasing ADA.[19]

Project Reach-Out was an enriched guidance program for potential dropouts in New York City. The evaluator reported that home visitations did affect attendance.[20] Fredman observed that eliminating home visits had a "negative effect not only on attendance but quite possibly on achievement."[21]

Conclusion

A survey of present practices and a review of the literature revealed that in spite of the thrust to improve attendance through innovation in curriculum and school organization, non-illness absenteeism remains a growing problem. In those districts responding to letters of inquiry, none had comprehensive plans for attacking non-illness absence; further, several of these districts are looking for such plans. In those districts where efforts have been made to attack the problem, total school personnel efforts, home visitation, and change in curriculum appeared to be important.

ESTABLISHMENT OF NEED

The survey of the present practices to this point had failed to reveal a program which met all the criteria of the task force hypothesis. To further the inquiry, the task force studied attendance procedures of each target school to discover the amount of apportionment lost through non-illness absence. A study of apportionment reports, summarized in Table I, was conducted for the first four school months of the 1974-75 term. In addition, a monetary value according to state reimbursement was calculated.

It appeared from a study of Table I that any system which could reduce the loss without the addition of clerical or counselor help promised a significant financial return to the district.

Although a monetary savings was important for fiscal reasons, the task force raised the question: could instructional time also be saved by having the pupil returned to the educational program promptly? In order to examine this question, the task force used the apportionment figure which is generated when one pupil is absent one day. This computation is summarized in Table II.

To simplify the figures in Table II, the task force converted the apportionment lost into instructional time lost,

TABLE I

APPORTIONMENT LOST BY TARGET SCHOOLS DURING

SCHOOL MONTHS ONE THROUGH FOUR

School	Apportionment Lost	Value
Elementary Schools A & B	1,452	$ 7,679
High School C	8,398	51,059
High School D	11,620	70,649
High School E	32,375	21,375
High School F	3,922	23,845

TABLE II

INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS LOST DURING SECOND

SCHOOL MONTH

School	Grade	Hours Lost
Schools A & B	5	537
School C	10	1,608
School D	10	5,532
School E	9 - 12	604
School F	10	2,028

using the second school month for the tenth grades in the regular high schools, for the fifth grades in the elementary schools, and for grades nine through twelve for the continuation high school. The number of class instructional hours in a regular school day at each level was used in the computation.

School programs discussed in the Review of the Literature, pages 3 through 9, reported that varying degrees of success in reducing non-illness absence could be achieved through intervention. The results obtained by the computerized attendance alert system installed in one of the target schools also indicated that pupils would respond to positive school interventions with better attendance.

The task force members then examined the attendance procedures at the target schools to determine what, if any, programs existed to reduce the amount of non-illness absence.

ISOLATION OF THE PROBLEM

Conferences were initiated first with area administrators, then with district child welfare and attendance persons, next with building principals, and finally with attendance clerks. It appeared that programs existed, but they were not consistent or in-depth. They were usually instituted by individual schools, but there were no organized district programs to increase attendance in four out of the five districts studied by the task force.

This investigation of attendance procedures revealed several weaknesses within the systems being used. Some of the more important deficiencies isolated by the task force were:

1. Absences were allowed to accumulate without home contact.
2. Identified truants received no follow up services.
3. Scant counseling attention was given to identified "poor attenders".
4. Parents were not informed of excessive absences.
5. Few curriculum or program adjustments were made to encourage better attendance.

Thus, the preliminary examination of systems reported by other districts to reduce non-illness absence, the monetary and instructional loss which such absence produced within the

target schools, and the weakness in systems currently in use convinced the task force members than an attendance system composed of intervention steps which included parent notification, counselor contact with identified pupils, and program modification where needed would produce a beneficial change in pupil attendance patterns.

PURPOSE OF THE PRACTICUM

The purpose of this practicum was to develop an attendance intervention system applicable in grades kindergarten through 12 which:

1. Identified with minimal time delay students with excessive unexcused absences.
2. Provided systematic intervention to return pupils to a learning program.
3. Reduced the apportionment and instructional time lost through excessive non-illness absences.
4. Operated without major expenditure of district funds.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM

Initial Conceptualization

The first assignment of the task force was to become familiar with the computerized attendance alert system installed in School F as this was to be the basic operational model. This study resulted in two modifications to the basic model -- implementation by clerks rather than by computer and provision for curriculum/program modification for pupils best able to benefit from such change. One constraint was placed upon the field trials by administrators of three of the four districts: the system must be installed without adding staff at the target schools. This constraint later proved to hamper task force implementation.

After task force members designed a flow chart of the system (Appendix A, page 68), they arranged to meet with the principals of the target schools. These discussions resulted in additional modifications. Because of the constraint regarding additional staff, most principals could not allocate sufficient clerical time to monitor the system if it encompassed the entire student body in the field trials. Consequently, the task force recommended to the principals that only one grade level be included in the field trials, with the exception of the continuation school. These agreements resulted in the tenth grade being used in the regular high schools, the fifth grade being used in the elementary schools, and all grades being used in the continuation school because of

its limited school enrollment. Studies of absentee rates made in the target schools had identified the tenth grade and fifth grade as having the highest rates in the regular schools.

Final Conceptualization

The attendance intervention system was finalized in two parts: Phase One consisting of parent notification and involvement, Phase Two consisting of pupil counseling and curriculum/program modification. The first phase contained four steps or interventions.

Phase One: Parent Notification and Involvement

Step One - Phone Call: As pupils were reported absent at the attendance accounting period, records were kept by the attendance clerks of pupils who remained out of school three consecutive days without parental contact. On the third day of such absence, a phone call was made to the home by attendance personnel. A log of such calls was maintained indicating who was contacted at the home and the results of the conversation (Appendix B, page 69). Students who did not return the next day were identified for Step Two.

Step Two - Five Day Letter: This step was initiated if on the fifth day the student had not returned. The attendance clerks mailed to the parents a form letter notifying them of the consecutive absences (Appendix C, page 71). A copy of the letter was filed with the pupil's counselor.

Step Three - Parent Conference Request Letter: The third step in the intervention plan became operable if the pupil did not return by the 10th day of consecutive absence. This was a letter from the counselor to the parent requesting a conference either by phone or in person (Appendix D, page 72). If this letter failed to elicit response, the pupil's name was tagged for the final step in the sequence.

Step Four - Home Visitation: By this time 12 to 15 days of continued absence had accrued, so the child welfare and attendance visitor was alerted. A home visit was made within 24 hours. The attendance visitor had several duties to perform upon contacting the parent at home. First, he had to ascertain if the parent had received the two letters. If the parent denied receipt, the attendance visitor verified the address in case it was incorrect in school records and mentioned briefly what the contents had been. He next elicited the parent's cooperation concerning the pupil's attendance and obtained a date as to when the pupil could be expected to return to school. If the parent wanted a conference with a counselor, the visitor arranged one.

Phase Two: Pupil Counseling and Curriculum/Program Modification

The second phase of the intervention process overlapped Steps Two through Four of Phase I. Pupils who returned as

a result of any of the intervention steps after the phone call were interviewed by a counselor. Depending upon the results of this interview, Phase Two interventions were initiated.

Alternative Contracts: The pupil was presented with a variety of alternatives designed to combat whatever rationale he presented for his non-attendance. He contracted to participate in one or more of the following:

1. Additional individual counseling
2. Group counseling
3. Change of class or teacher
4. Change in hours of attendance
5. Complete change of program
6. Individual testing by counselor or psychologist
7. Alternative school or program
8. School transfer
9. Medical referral
10. Referral to outside agencies.

In those cases where none of the alternatives were successful, task force members with counsel[illegible] approval were ready to make recommendations for changing course content or for developing new curricula.

TESTING THE INTERVENTION SYSTEM

The system was field tested in the six schools during the ninth and tenth school months of the 1974-1975 school year. Regardless of the prior planning and the in-service conducted by the task force, the implementation of the intervention system at each of the target schools encountered varying difficulties.

Schools A and B:

There were difficulties in implementing the system within the target elementary schools. In the first of the two original target schools selected by the task force monitor, the secretary became so upset about having to call parents concerning attendance that the principal withdrew his school from the field trials. An alternate school was selected, and the study proceeded.

Personnel problems were the most difficult to surmount within the two target schools. In both cases the school secretary, who was also the principal's secretary, was assigned the task of implementation. Considerable time was devoted to maintaining morale as these employees felt they were assigned unwelcomed tasks. As the field trials progressed and the data concerning absenteeism were collected, the secretaries responded with better spirits. Results indicated their efforts were fruitful.

Formative evaluations at the two sites revealed several facts. Parent notification by phone appeared to be sufficient in combating absenteeism. Record keeping errors and attendance accounting errors apparently occurred because of substitutes who replaced trained clerical and teaching personnel.

School C:

The task force member assigned to School C provided for in-service education in the intervention system for the principal, the attendance teacher, and two attendance clerks. This in-service consisted of an explanation of the intervention system and a demonstration of the use of the forms that were provided to the school. Weekly conferences with the task force members allowed for continuing in-service.

At the inception of the program, it was given high priority by the principal. The person in charge of the attendance office was a teacher with an administrative credential. She had excellent rapport with students, attendance clerks, and the principal.

The teacher made home calls with the district attendance visitor. Since no funds were available for late afternoon and evening telephone calls, the teacher took the responsibility for making these calls after the working day.

A series of problems had impact upon the system's effectiveness. An assistant principal became ill and was replaced by the attendance teacher, thus leaving the

attendance office without direct supervision until the principal appointed another teacher in charge. He too was interested in administration and held an administrative credential, but was able to work only part time. His efforts did result in more consistency. Later one of the attendance clerks was ill for two weeks, causing delay in implementing some interventions. The following problems were encountered:

1. No funds were available for late afternoon and evening calls although the teacher in charge made some calls. A half-time person working in the late afternoon would have provided consistency and increased effectiveness.

2. Attendance accuracy was hampered by late arriving buses, since first period was the attendance reporting period.

3. The counselors had heavy loads and were not able to commit sufficient time to the intervention phases.

4. Teachers were not involved to a sufficient extent; consequently, these important resources were not fully utilized. A school-wide project should yield increased effectiveness.

Side effects resulting from the attendance intervention system were:

1. The school administration realized that consistency in personnel in executing the program was advantageous.

However, even with all the uncertainty of personnel, the program was judged to be successful.

2. The administration and attendance office personnel became more "attendance conscious."

3. The personalities of the attendance personnel, including the clerks, were important to the success of the trials and in building constructive school-home relations.

4. School-home relations were affected positively.

5. Parents gained knowledge concerning their childrens' attendance patterns.

6. The number of students out of class and wandering on campus was reduced.

School D:

The implementation of the intervention system at School D was assisted by cooperative administrators, teacher-in-charge, and attendance clerical staff. In-service meetings were held first with administrators and the teacher-in-charge, then with the attendance clerical staff and the teacher-in-charge, and finally with these persons individually as necessary.

School D also reported difficulty with late arriving buses and subsequent errors in reporting absences. Students did not have enough opportunity to follow proper channels

for returning to school after absences, thus causing inaccuracies. Alternatives were suggested to alleviate the problem. One was to change attendance taking procedures from period one to period two. The other alternative was to schedule those students riding the same bus into the same first period classes. During the trials, however, no changes were made.

Formative evaluations during the course of the field trials resulted in the following observations:

1. Additional personnel were needed to make phone calls and home visits. Selected teachers could conduct such contacts as part of their administrative assignment.

2. At faculty meetings discussions of procedures for reporting attendance would be beneficial.

3. Attendance improved when activities such as examinations, field trips, or social events were scheduled.

4. The intervention system produced quicker response than the previously used method.

5. Parents reacted in a positive manner to such contact.

6. Home visits could be more beneficial if scheduled earlier in the intervention system.

School E:

The task force provided an in-service program for the district superintendent and the business manager in

addition to the site administration and staff. This program was instrumental in establishing communication lines which assisted in the implementation of the intervention system. As in the other target schools, illness and lack of sufficient help at times resulted in some pupils not being serviced. The school principal died just before the implementation of the field trial, and an experienced administrator was not available as a replacement. Consequently, the task force monitor found it necessary to allot more of his time to the project than had been planned originally.

In monitoring School E, two problems appeared consistently: many parents were not available for phone calls during the day; many pupils were unable to be interviewed to determine basic reasons for absence. For the most part, these were pupils who were on work permits and were required to attend school only one day a week.

If the attendance intervention system were to become operational in a continuation school, as the task force monitor recommended, staff time would have to be changed to allow phone calls in the evening. In addition, the home visit intervention would have to be initiated sooner in the system as many of the pupils referred to continuation school alrady had developed habits of non-attendance.

School F:

The task force monitor for School F had one advantage over the other task force members. A similar intervention system had already been operational for one year in that school. However, several problems identified in the other target schools were also present at School F. Two of the trained attendance clerks from the prior year had left the district; the counseling staff had not been involved in the original attendance alert design. Therefore, in addition to providing in-service to the new clerks, the task force monitor had to convince the counseling staff that the additional task of serving pupils identified as having attendance problems was an important extension of their regular counseling procedure.

The counseling structure at the school had been re-organized during the 1973-74 school year to represent speciality areas rather than an assignment of pupils by grade and alphabet. Two counselors had been allotted as "crisis counselors." They worked with pupils having behavior problems. Attendance, or the lack of it, was defined as a behavior pattern; therefore, these counselors were to provide the intervention techniques required by the system: determining reasons for non-illness absence, offering in-depth counseling on either an individual or

a group basis, recommending testing by the district psychologist, making class changes, making schedule changes, or recommending complete program revision with possible transfer to the continuation school. Pupils entering the Phase Two mode of the field trial were assigned to these counselors.

Three recommendations for major changes in curriculum and programming resulted from formative evaluations of Phase Two:

1. Establish variable credit courses. With such a change, teachers could grant partial credit to students who were on contract with the counselor in the Phase Two intervention mode.

2. Establish summer school matching courses of variable credit thus permitting pupils to complete courses for the full five credits.

3. Amplify the core program. Some students entering the Phase Two mode scored three to five years below grade level in basic skills when measured on the California Test of Basic Skills. (Providing such core classes would mean reassignment of several teachers, a move which the local teachers' union might oppose. Such opposition will be addressed by the district during the 1975-76 school year.)

Difficulty in Accuracy

All of the target schools reported errors in implementing the various phases of intervention. In some cases, required phone calls were not made, or letters were not sent. It was felt by the task force, however, that such inaccuracies did not impair the total effort or the reliability of the data collected.

EVALUATION OF THE INTERVENTION SYSTEM

The evaluation plan designed by the task force attempted to answer nine questions.

1. What information was revealed by a review of the data collected?
2. Was the sytem effective in reducing unexcused absence?
3. Was sufficient time allocated for monitoring the system?
4. Was attendance measurably improved by the interventions?
5. Was the system effective in changing attendance behavior?
6. Were pupil counseling and curriculum program modifications needed?
7. Will the system continue to be used in the target schools?
8. Was the system replicable?
9. Was the system cost effective?

Specific conclusions deduced by the task force after studying the collected data will be presented as part of the discussion of each of the data tables.

Data Analysis

1. What Information was Revealed by a Review of the Data Collected?

In the interpretation of the following tables, the numbers cited represent the frequency that a pupil or pupils received intervention. It was possible for a student to enter the system several times and be subject to repeated interventions.

Phase One: Parent Involvement

Phase One was designed to involve parents as soon as a student had accumulated three days of consecutive absence. A phone call was placed by an attendance clerk notifying the parent of the absences and attempting to ascertain the reason for the absences. It was at this point that a student was identified as having entered the intervention system, and his subsequent attendance behavior was monitored.

Pupil Distribution

Presented in Table III is the distribution of pupils who entered the intervention system during the field trials in the target schools.

Four hundred sixty-nine (469) pupils were monitored by attendance office personnel and task force members. Of this, 37 or 7.8 percent, consisted of fifth grade elementary pupils. Of the remaining 432 high school pupils,

10.8 percent was contributed by School C; 22.4 percent by School D; 17.7 percent by School E; and 41.1 percent by School F.

TABLE III

NUMBER OF PUPILS ENTERING THE INTERVENTION SYSTEM DURING THE FIELD TRIALS*

School	Number	Percent of Total
Elementary Schools A & B	37	7.9
High School C	51	10.9
High School D	105	22.4
High School E	83	17.7
High School F	193	41.2
Total	469	

*This table cites actual pupil numbers, not frequency.

Step One: Phone Contacts

Table IV enumerates the effects of the Step One, Phase One intervention which required a phone contact with the parent or guardian of those pupils identified as having three consecutive days absence.

This intervention appeared successful 320 times out of the 551 times it was used. In returning the secondary

pupils to school, it was 54.5 percent effective. In returning the elementary pupils to school, the phone call was 100 percent effective. This intervention's success with elementary pupils obviated the initiating of the remaining three interventions at Schools A and B. Hence, the elementary pupils have not been included in subsequent tables.

Within the secondary schools, this intervention was most effective at School D, being successful 86 percent of the time in returning pupils called. At School C, School E, and School F this intervention was 48 percent, 34 percent, and 50 percent successful respectively, in returning pupils called.

TABLE IV

NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL STEP ONE, PHASE ONE INTERVENTIONS

School	No. Times Pupils Were Absent 3 Consecutive Days	No. Times Pupils Returned After Being Phoned	Percent Effective
Schools A & B	45	45	100
High School C	50	24	48
High School D	107	92	86
High School E	103	36	34
High School F	246	123	50
Total	551	320	58.1

Step Two: Five Day Letter

The effects of Step Two, Phase One intervention are presented in Table V. This intervention consisted of mailing a letter to the home of those pupils who failed to return to school as a result of Step One, the phone call. The letter's contents notified the parents that the pupil had been absent for five consecutive days. Two hundred fourteen (214) times pupils were carried into this part of the system and 102 times pupils returned to school after having received the letter. This step was 47.6 percent effective. Interviews held with the returning pupils indicated that the letters were instrumental in causing the pupils' return.

In the number of times pupils had to be contacted, this intervention was most effective at High School E, obtaining a 52 percent return and next most effective at High School F, exhibiting a 49.5 percent return.

TABLE V

NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL STEP TWO,
PHASE ONE INTERVENTIONS

School	No. Times Pupils Were Sent 5-Day Letter	No. Times Pupils Returned After Letter Sent	Percent Returned
High School C	12	2	17
High School D	15	6	40
High School E	64	33	52
High School F	123	61	49.5
Total	214	102	47.6

Step Three: Ten Day Letter

Table VI presents the number of times pupils were eligible for Step Three, the ten-day letter. This letter requested a parent conference as the result of ten days of consecutive absence.

Of the 92 times this letter was sent, it was effective 35 times, giving this intervention a 38 percent success ratio.

Among the individual schools, this intervention seemed to produce the least results, except for High School F. There it was 58.6 percent effective. However, Schools C, D. and E had 17 percent, 11 percent, and 19 percent return respectively.

TABLE VI

NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL STEP THREE,
PHASE ONE INTERVENTIONS

School	No. Times Pupils Were Sent 10-day Letter	No. Times Pupils Returned After Letter Sent	Percent Return
High School C	6	1	17
High School D	9	1	11
High School E	31	6	19
High School F	46	27	58.6
Total	92	35	38

Step Four: The Home Visit

Table VII contains information concerning the final step in Phase One of the intervention system, the home visit. Step Four was activated by school attendance personnel to make contact with the pupils who had not responded to any of the preceding interventions. An attendance visitor was dispatched within 24 hours of receiving the school's request.

The numbers in this Table represent actual pupils qualifying for intervention. The system serviced 65 students by providing home visits. Twenty-four, or 36.9 percent of those 65 students, returned to school after the visit was accomplished.

Forty-one pupils evidenced no response to any of the interventions. This number computed to be 8.7 percent of the 469 pupils who were used in the field trials. It appeared that 428 pupils returned to school as a result of the various intervention steps.

High School D, although there were eight pupils needing home visits, made no home visits because of lack of personnel to make such calls. None of those pupils responded. High School C was 22 percent effective in returning two pupils out of the nine requiring home visits. High School E was 28 percent effective in returning eight pupils out of 29 needing home visits. High School F was 73.6 percent effective in returning 14 pupils out of the 19 receiving home visits.

TABLE VII

NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL STEP FOUR, PHASE ONE INTERVENTIONS*

School	No. Students Receiving Home Visits	No. Students Returning After Home Visit	Percent Effective
High School C	9	2	22
High School D	8	0	0
High School E	29	8	28
High School F	19	14	73.6
Total	65	24	36.9

*This table cites actual pupil numbers, not frequency.

Phase Two: Pupil Counseling and Curriculum/Program Modifications

This module of the intervention system overlapped Steps Two through Four and involved the pupils in a counseling situation which could result in class changes, program changes, school transfer, psychological testing, or medical referral. Suggestions from the counselor or the task force member for curriculum program modification within the schools could arise from information obtained from these interviews.

Upon the return to school of those pupils having non-illness absences after Steps Two, Three, or Four, the Phase Two module of the intervention system became operable. Counselors contacted the returning pupils to discover the underlying causes for such continued absence.

Student Interview: Phase Two

Table VIII presents the number of students who entered the Phase Two module of the intervention system in the target schools. Of the 178 students, High School F was responsible for 101, or 56.7 percent of the pupils entering Phase Two. High School C had 10 of its pupils enter this phase, or 5.6 percent of the total 178 pupils. High School D had just three students enter this phase or 1.6 percent of the total entering. High School E had 64 or 35.9 percent of the total entering.

TABLE VIII

NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENTERING
PHASE TWO INTERVENTIONS

School	Number Entering	Percent of Total
High School C	10	5.6
High School D	3	1.6
High School E	64	35.9
High School F	101	56.7
Total	178	

The above pupils who entered the Phase Two series of interventions represent only 37.9 percent of the total 469 students entered in the field trials at the target schools. It appears that 254 pupils in the secondary schools were returned to instruction after having received just the Step One intervention, the phone call. It could be concluded that the phone call to the home was effective in returning 58.7 percent of the 432 secondary school students to instruction.

This completes the analysis of data collected from a study of the intervention system in process. However, the task force obtained other information which also was pertinent in measuring the effectiveness of the practicum field trials.

Comparison of Non-Illness Apportionment Figures

Another facet of the field trials which would be of interest to school administrators concerns fiscal returns. The source of the data contained in Table IX is from the business office of each school district. The information concerns the non-illness apportionment loss for the two school months immediately prior to the field trials and for the same amount of time during the field trials. For the two months prior to the field trials there was an apparent total loss to all districts of 6,964 apportionment days which had a monetary value of $55,211.00. After the intervention system was installed in each district, there was a total loss in apportionment to all districts of 6,540 apportionment days, having a monetary value of $52,427.00. This represented a total saving of $2,784.00.

Superficially, this appears to be an insignificant saving. However, if the apportionment and value of that apportionment for High School E is removed, (reason explained below) the figures for the remaining three districts represent an apparent saving of $7,878.00. This would appear to be significant for an intervention system which treated a single grade level and added no staff to implement it.

The task force monitor for School E explained at least two variables, unique to continuation schools, affected

results during the field trials:

1. Each year during the 9th and 10th school months the regular high schools of the district purged their student bodies of the discipline problems and the attendance problems by transferring those students to School E.

2. Insufficient time remained for the intervention system to have full effect upon many of these transfer students.

The intervention system, according to the task force monitor, did make significant difference upon the attendance patterns of those students who had been enrolled prior to the field trials.

Excluding the continuation school, School E, then each district reported an apparent savings as a result of the installation of the intervention system. The Elementary Schools A and B show that the loss of apportionment in non-illness absence was reduced from 102 to 81, a 21 percent reduction. High School C's apportionment loss was reduced from 2,696 to 2,100, a 22 percent reduction. High School D's apportionment loss was reduced from 2,205 to 1,919, a 13 percent reduction. High School F's apportionment loss was reduced from 645 to 558, a 13 percent reduction.

The mean reduction in loss of apportionment due to non-illness absence for all the districts participating in the field trials, excluding the continuation school, was 17 percent.

A ranking of the schools in the order of reduction of apportionment loss shows:

TABLE IX

RANK ORDER OF REDUCTION OF APPORTIONMENT LOSS

School Rank	Amount of Apportionment Loss Reduced	Value of Amount Reduced
1. High School C	596	$3,623.00
2. High School D	290	$1,762.00
3. High School F	87	$ 528.00
4. Schools A & B	21	$1,986.00

Thus, the introduction of the intervention system did affect apportionment favorably in four of the five target schools.

Proposal Evaluation

2. Was the System Effective in Reducing Unexcused Absences?

From the information contained in Table X and excluding High School E, it was concluded that the intervention system apparently reduced by 17 percent the loss of apportionment hours due to unexcused absence. During the field trials, pupils entered the system 587 times. Of this number, 81.9 percent or 481 times pupils returned to school as a result of the various interventions during Phase One. The range of absence for any one pupil was from three days to 15 days. Forty-one students did not respond to any of the intervention

TABLE X

APPORTIONMENT LOSS COMPARISON

BEFORE AND AFTER THE FIELD TRIALS

SCHOOL	APPORTIONMENT LOST		VALUE OF LOST APPORTIONMENT	
	BEFORE	AFTER	BEFORE	AFTER
Elementary A & B	102	81	$ 9,649	$ 7,663
High School C	2,696	2,100	$16,391	$12,767
High School D	2,205	1,919	$13,406	$11,667
High School E	1,316	1,882	$11,844	$16,938
High School F	645	558	$ 3,921	$ 3,392

steps. These participants were referred to the district child welfare and attendance offices as being identified as possible truants.

Interviews conducted by counselors revealed that in most cases the pressure exerted by the various intervention steps was responsible for the pupils' return. In the elementary schools the Step One phone call was 100 percent effective in obtaining a return of the pupils. Fifty-eight percent of the secondary pupils were returned to instruction as a result of phone calls. In the secondary schools the intervention system was 90.5 percent effective in returning to instruction those 432 students in the field trials.

The task force concluded that the intervention system within the limits described was effective in reducing unexcused absence.

Process Evaluation

3. Was Sufficient Time Allocated for Implementing the System?

Monitoring by Task Force: In the opinion of the task force members, the time allotment for members was adequate. However, unforeseen circumstances, such as illness of support personnel, resulted in some task force members having to increase their time allotment.

Implementing by School Personnel: At elementary schools A and B and at High School F there appeared to have been sufficient time for properly implementing the system.

At High Schools C and D, the time allotted was adequate only for the number of pupils receiving intervention. However, it was not sufficient to serve the entire 10th grade as planned.

There is evidence that more time was needed by support personnel at School E to implement Step Three, the Ten-Day Letter, and Step Four, the home visit.

If the intervention system were to serve all grade levels of the high schools and the elementary schools, additional clerical and supervisory time would be required for successful implementation at each of the schools.

Outcome Evaluation

4. Was Attendance Measureably Improved by the Interventions?

A summary of the information presented in Tables IV, V, VI, and VII indicates the following:

1. Step One, the phone call, was successful in returning pupils 320 times out of 551 calls required -- a 58 percent return. In the elementary schools this intervention was 100 percent effective.
2. 102 times were pupils returned to isntruction out of 214 times that the Step Two, the five-day letter was used -- a 48 percent return.

3. 35 times out of 92 contacts pupils returned as a result of intervention Step Three, the parent conference request letter -- a 38 percent return.
4. Of the 65 pupils who required home visits as part of Step Four intervention, 24 of them returned as a result -- a 37 percent return.

The four intervention steps were successful in returning pupils to instruction 481 times out of 503 contacts. This represented an effectiveness of 95.6 percent.

It appeared that one intervention step alone, the phone call, returned 254 secondary students to instruction out of those 432 secondary students in the field trials.

The task force concluded that such returns indicated that pupil attendance was measureably improved by the intervention steps.

5. Was the System Effective in Changing Attendance Behavior?

Table XI presents data concerning the number of times a student entered the intervention system. Two criteria used for qualifying a pupil for entry into the intervention system were:

1. A pupil must have been absent for a minimum of three consecutive days to a maximum of 15 consecutive days.

2. The pupil's absence must have been for non-illness.

Task force members identified such students from absence lists and tallied the number of times each pupil entered the system.

Of the 469 pupils who were used in the field study because they met the criteria, 364 of them entered the system only one time. This represented 77.6 percent of the total entering.

80 pupils entered the system twice only, 17 percent of the total.

22 pupils entered the intervention system three times, 4.7 percent of the total.

Pupils receiving intervention four or more times during the field trials numbered three -- only .6 percent of the total.

Less than one-third of the pupils receiving intervention were repeat offenders.

Of the five target schools, Elementary Schools A and B had the least number of pupils entering the intervention system more than once. Out of a total of 37 pupils who had been absent for non-illness reasons, 30 were absent sufficient times to enter the system once; 6 entered for the second time; one pupil entered the third time.

The task force concluded that such data represented significant attendance behavior change, at least during the field trials.

TABLE XI

NUMBER OF TIMES PUPILS ENTERED THE INTERVENTION SYSTEM

Number of Pupils Who Entered the Intervention System:					
Schools	In Field Trials	One Time Only	Two Times Only	Three Times Only	Four or More
A & B	37	30	6	1	0
C	51	43	8	0	0
D	105	93	8	4	0
E	83	54	20	7	2
F	193	144	38	10	1
	469	364	80	22	3

6. Were Pupil Counseling and Curriculum/Program Modifications Needed?

Neither in-depth counseling nor curriculum modifications were needed at Elementary Schools A and B inasmuch as the phone call was sufficient to return all of their pupils to instruction.

In High School C, of the 10 pupils who entered the counseling curriculum/program modification mode, nine of them were transferred to the alternate school program. One student

was referred to the district child welfare and attendance office for possible juvenile court action.

At High School D, of the three students who entered the counseling curriculum/program modification mode, two of them received individual counseling and were returned to their regular classes. One student was referred to a community agency.

At High School E, 64 pupils entered the counseling curriculum/program modification mode. This fact resulted in the following actions:

1. 33 pupils received no additional counseling intervention.
2. 14 students received additional counseling as well as changes in class schedule to resolve teacher and/or student "personality clashes."
3. 11 students had their hours of attendance modified to resolve conflicts with out-of-school responsibilities.
4. 3 students were jailed and never reentered school.
5. 2 pupils were runaways and never reentered school.
6. 1 pupil moved out of the school's attendance area.

High School F which had the largest number of students entering the counseling curriculum/program modification mode, also had the largest number of such interventions.

1. Of the 101 pupils who entered this phase, 65 of them were interviewed by the counselor and required no other intervention steps.
2. Four students were referred for special education classes after the counselor recommended additional testing by the district psychologist.
3. Seven students signed contracts with the counselor to meet once a week for individual counseling concerning school progress.
4. Eleven students were changed from regular classes to full time remedial programs.
5. Seven students entered into small group counseling sessions concerning values clarification (Reality Therapy).
6. Two students with parent consent were transferred to the continuation school for a shorter school day program.
7. Five students never returned after the home visit and were transferred to the continuation school.

The task force members concluded that the counseling curriculum/program modification module of the intervention system was needed and was instrumental in bringing about many of the reported changes in attendance behavior.

7. Will the System Continue to be Used in the Target Schools?

At Elementary Schools A and B, the task force monitor reported that both principals will continue to use the phone call intervention as a means to obtain prompt return of pupils to school.

Task Force monitors for High Schools C and D indicated that each school plans to continue Phase One and Phase Two insofar as their budgets will allow.

High School E will continue to implement the system with two modifications: shortening the intervals between each step of the intervention system and replacing the parent conference request letter with the home visit.

High School F will continue to use the system in its entirety and at all grade levels.

It was concluded, therefore, the system in whole, in part, or with modification will continue to be used in the target schools.

8. Was the System Replicable?

In the original conceptualization of the intervention system and its first implementation in a more basic form in High School F during the 1973-74 school year, it was a computerized system. One question to be studied by the task force was whether a more sophisticated model could be replicated by districts not having computer capability.

During the field trials, High School F continued to use its computer system to implement the attendance interventions. The five other schools used attendance clerks to implement the various interventions. These five schools reported that the system was replicated within their present administrative procedures.

As a result of the field testing of the intervention system in situations where both computer implementation and clerical implementation were used, the task force concluded that the intervention system was replicable.

9. Was the System Cost Effective?

The task force members examined the intervention system as implemented from the point of view of cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit. It discovered a number of constraints:

1. Because the "no additional personnel" constraint was imposed upon the implementation phase of the intervention system, the conceptual and evaluative framework had to be a fixed budget approach to future implementation within districts.
2. This constraint also limited an extension of the program beyond the normal working hours of attendance personnel or the school secretary; therefore, telephone calls after 5:00 p.m. or late evening calls (except in the case of High School F) would be limited, if not impossible.

3. The training of additional personnel would have to be done with a minimum of additional resources of time or money.
4. The motivation of attendance personnel implementing and maintaining the intervention system would have to be increased considerably if appropriate student response was to be continued over a period longer than that of the field trials.

The above constraints tend to dictate that a number of alternatives were not available to task force members in the implementation of the intervention system. Because the data indicated that considerable cost-benefit accrued to the districts using the system in reducing the loss of apportionment, the system appears to be cost-effective.

Since most of the district personnel involved with child welfare and attendance were already employed by the district, there were no direct personnel costs. The apportionment monies recovered by the districts through increased attendance were a direct result of a change in operational procedures and not through the addition of personnel. This fact seems to fulfill one important criterion for cost-effectiveness analysis. Such analysis consists of systematic examination and comparison of alternative courses of action, and one of the actions is the assessment of economic resource cost -- personnel. In view of the fact that such savings of

apportionment money was realized at only one grade level at the various target schools, it was reasonable to conclude that an expansion of the intervention system to the entire school population of the districts would recoup proportionally more apportionment monies heretofore lost to the school districts.

Students who return to school and, as a result of interventions, remain in school, represent cost-benefit or long-range return on investment to society beyond monetary calculation. The cost-effectiveness of the intervention system is technically one of maximum utilization of resource allocation since every dollar expenditure has a two, three, or fourfold return on annual investment. A long-range investment return to society is realized from the fact that students who return to and remain in school ultimately become higher revenue-producing citizens.

SUMMARY AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

A. Early Identification and Immediate Intervention

The practicum proposal specified that the intervention system would provide for early identification of students developing excessive unexcused absences. The task force determined that identifying pupils having three consecutive days of absence without parental or guardian contact would meet the criterion of "early identification".

Such a determination was based upon administrative experience and the study of attendance records which revealed that pupils with common ailments such as upset stomachs, headaches, and similar minor conditions are normally absent one to two days. Three or more consecutive days of absence usually indicated a more serious illness or the possibility of intentional absence.

Immediate intervention was provided in the practicum design in the form of a phone call to the home after three days of consecutive absence. In addition, the design provided for three other interventions to take place automatically. If the pupil did not return within two days of the telephone call, the second intervention, consisting of a letter notifying the parents that the pupil had been absent five consecutive days, was initiated. The third intervention step followed after the tenth consecutive day

of absence. This was another letter which notified the parents of continued absence and requested a conference with a counselor. The reasons for the five day interval between the letters were to allow time for preparing and mailing the letters and to provide for possible response from the pupil's parents.

There were 551 instances where pupils were absent three consecutive days. In 320 or 58.1 percent of the instances, the pupils returned to instruction following the first intervention.

As a result of the above data, the task force concluded that the intervention system appeared to provide the required early identification and returned to the learning environment pupils developing unexcused absence patterns.

B. Reasons Cited for Unexcused Absences

In order to determine remediation strategies as required by the Phase Two module of the intervention system, task force members analyzed the records maintained by counselors who had interviewed 178 returning pupils. The data revealed the following reasons most frequently mentioned by students to account for their lack of attendance.

1. "Just did not want to come to school." 100 pupils expressed some variation of this rationale for lack of attendance.

2. "Failing courses." Counselors determined that 25 students remained out of school because they were failing courses, usually resulting from a lack of basic learning skills.
3. "Teachers do not like me." 15 pupils cited conflicts with teachers as being the reason for not attending.
4. "School's a drag." Counselor notes revealed that 14 pupils saw little value in coming to school.
5. "I gotta work." "School's too long." 13 pupils gave combinations of reasons that concerned the need for earning money or that they could not concentrate in " all those classes."
6. "I didn't ask for those classes." 11 pupils indicated that they had been placed in classes that they neither liked nor had asked for.

C. Counseling or Curriculum/Program Adjustment Interventions Congruent with Student Reasons for Absence

197 pupils who entered the intervention system during the field trials were given counseling or curriculum/program adjustment.

100 students received one or more counseling sessions.

28 students received a series of counseling sessions.

30 students were given class or teacher changes.

32 students received curriculum/program changes.

Seven students required action beyond the scope of a formal school program: three were placed in custody of juvenile authorities; one was referred for juvenile court action; two ran away from home; one pupil moved away.

D. Savings in Instructional Time

The reduction of apportionment loss displayed in Table X on page 45 could be represented as a gain in apparent instructional time. Converted from apportionment to instructional hours, it is the equivalent of 4,940 hours of instruction.

Apparently 4,940 hours if instruction were available to those pupils who were returned to school through the intervention system. These same pupils might have lost this opportunity by remaining out of school longer.

Final Review

Since the practicum imposed a change in attendance procedures at the target schools by installing the intervention system in parallel with the school's normal procedures, obtaining the cooperation of attendance clerks, supervisors, and counselors was important to a successful implementation. Although the practicum did not propose to measure the effects that cooperation on the part of the implementing personnel would have upon the results of the intervention system, other

districts installing similar intervention systems might focus upon the importance of such motivation.

Other school systems having similar socio-economic features and size as that of the target schools could expect the following results from pupils exhibiting non-illness absence attendance patterns:

1. Elementary pupils will react favorably to the phone call alone.
2. Most secondary pupils will react favorably to the phone call and the five day letter.
3. Among the secondary pupils, the incidence of repeated non-illness absence will be decreased.
4. Among secondary pupils, similar interventions as those described in the practicum will affect a favorable change in attendance behavior.

The task force members believe that the intervention system as implemented in the six target schools, given the restrictions of no additional personnel and limiting the scope to provide service to only one grade level or to those pupils who could be serviced during the regular working day, did provide firm support for the hypothesis:

"A system which identifies with minimal time delay those students with excessive unexcused absence patterns and which provides interventions will

reduce such absences within districts having diverse socio-economic patterns, within differing school system organizations, and within differing school-age groups."

Institutionalization of the Practicum:

At schools A and B, the two elementary schools where the Intervention System was field tested, the procedures have been filed with the school principals, and both schools are continuing with the parent notification as implemented in the practicum design. The district Department of Child Welfare and Attendance is studying the feasibility of instituting the practice in all of the schools within the district.

Both schools C and D have instituted the intervention system at the other two grade levels, eleventh and twelfth. Because of the size of the district, the home visit step will be implemented only as work load permits. The written procedures have been filed with the attendance offices of the two schools.

School E, the continuation high school, will continue the intervention system with two modifications: shortening the intervals between each of the interventions and replacing the parent conference request letter with the home visit. These changes were believed necessary because of the unique problem attendance presents in such a school.

At school F administrative procedures have been filed with the administrator in charge of attendance. In addition, the Early Intervention System has been installed and implemented at all grade levels. The only modification to the field tested version is that a computerized absence list has been substituted. The counseling interventions as described in the practicum and the parent notification phase have been adopted unchanged. The entire attendance intervention procedure has been adopted as part of the Pupil Personnel Office Rules and Regulations.

Applicability to Other Districts:

The El Rancho Unified School District in Los Angeles County has installed as part of a $50,000 Title I grant the Intervention System as described in the practicum. At present it is being implemented on a pilot basis, but using the computerized version, in Drew Junior High. The system will be implemented in all the district's schools in September, 1976.

As a result of an article submitted to Computerworld by Mr. Grady, a member of the task force which tested the Early Intervention System, school districts in New York, Chicago, Salem, Oregon; Mesquite, Texas; and Modesto, California, requested information concerning the computer alert version upon which the Early Intervention System was based. Copies of the administrative procedures and a summary of the practicum results were forwarded.

Publication of Results:

A summary of the practicum and its results submitted by Mr. Grady was accepted for publication by the Pupil Personnel Division of the California State Department of Education in its Pupil Personnel Newsletter. In addition, Mr. James Milner, who was the Los Angeles County Consultant in Child Welfare and Attendance to the practicum task force, forwarded a copy of the summary for inclusion in the CASCWA Newletter of the California Association of Supervisors of Child Welfare and Attendance.

FOOTNOTES

1. Robert C. Campbell, "Child Welfare and Attendance Services," THRUST, February, 1973, p. 14.

2. Op. cit., p. 15.

3. Loc. cit.

4. Gordon T. Morris, "The Truant," TODAY'S EDUCATION, January, 1972, p. 41.

5. Dewey McCullock, "No Excuses Wanted -- or Needed," SCHOOL MANAGEMENT, April, 1974, p. 28.

6. Op. cit., p. 29.

7. Morris, Op. cit., p. 42.

8. E. L. Gaetz, EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUP COUNSELING PROCEDURES, Edmonton, Alberta, Calgary School Board (Alberta), 1972.

9. Don S. Cochrane, "Whatever Happened to the Truant Officer?" JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PUPIL PERSONNEL WORKERS; 17:4:188-192, September, 1973.

10. Campbell, op. cit., p. 16.

11. Loc. cit.

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13. Op. cit., p. 22.

14. From a selection reproduced from the not-yet-published book, SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND NEIGHBORHOOD, Eugene Litwak and Henry Meyer, New York: Columbia University Press, 1974, found in the article entitled "Formal Authority as a School-Community Linking Procedure," Eugene Litwak and Henry Meyer, INTELLECT, December, 1973, p. 196.

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Replies to Letters of Inquiry

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David C. Patton, Director
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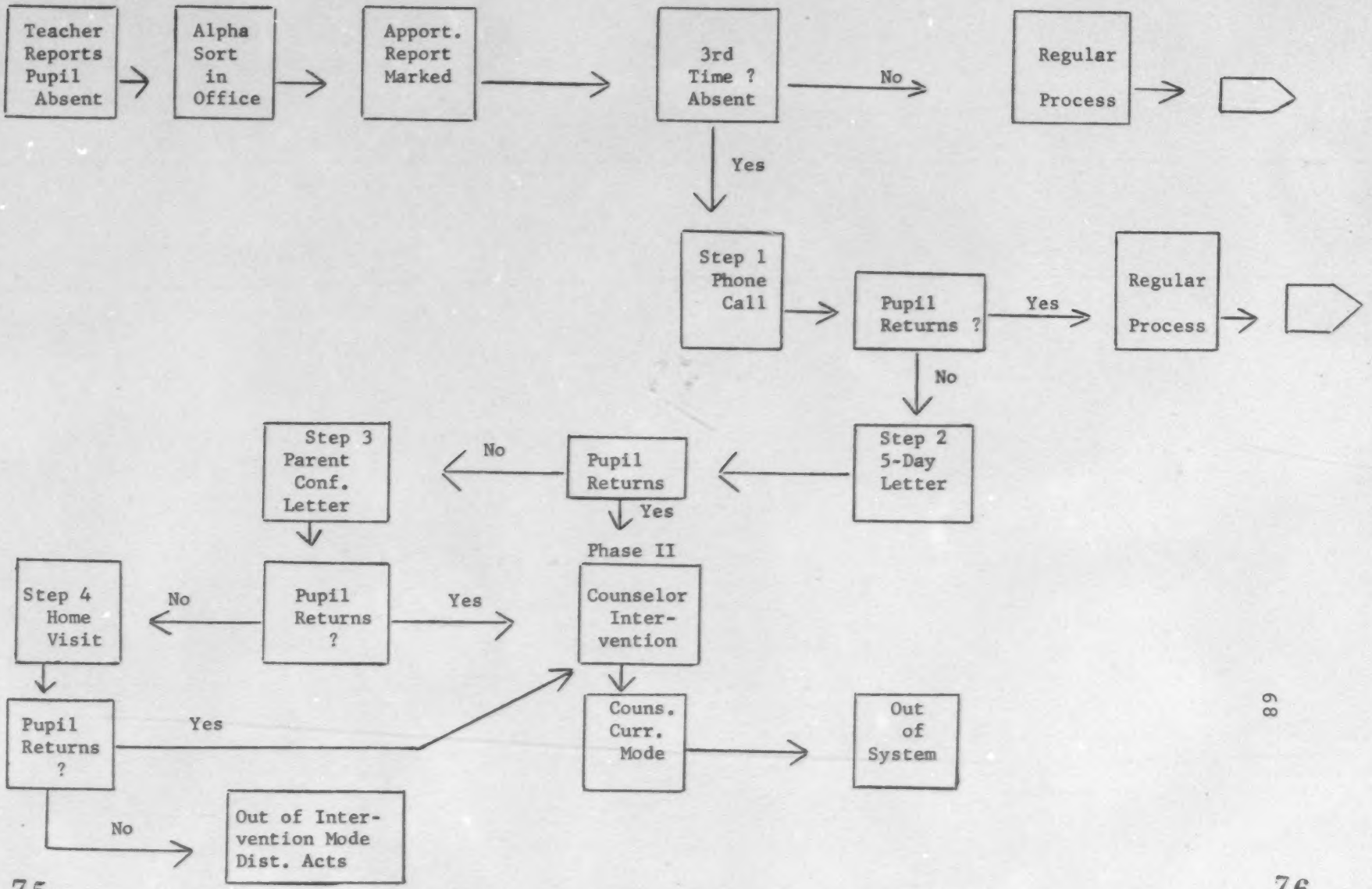
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Flow Chart of Attendance Intervention



APPENDIX B

TELEPHONE CALL VERIFICATION RECORD

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE INTERVENTION SYSTEM

Student_____ District_____
Grade_____ School_____

Phase I

Step 1 - Telephone Verification Date of call_____ Reason for absence: _____Illness _____Medical/Dental Appointment _____Bereavement _____Truant _____Attendance Accounting Error _____Other Contact: Parent_____Other_____ Remarks: Verified by:_____	Step 1 - Telephone Verification Date of call_____ Reason for absence: _____Illness _____Medical/Dental Appointment _____Bereavement _____Truant _____Attendance Accounting Error _____Other Contact: Parent_____Other_____ Remarks: Verified by:_____	Step 2 - 5 Day Letter Date sent_____ Result Step 2 - 5 Day Letter Date sent_____ Result Step 3 - 10 Day Letter - Parent Conference Date sent_____ Result
Step 1 - Telephone Verification Date of call_____ Reason for absence: _____Illness _____Medical/Dental Appointment _____Bereavement _____Truant _____Attendance Accounting Error _____Other Contact: Parent_____Other_____ Remarks: Verified by:_____	Step 1 - Telephone Verification Date of call_____ Reason for absence: _____Illness _____Medical/Dental Appointment _____Bereavement _____Truant _____Attendance Accounting Error _____Other Contact: Parent_____Other_____ Remarks: Verified by:_____	Step 3 - 10 Day Letter - Parent Conference Date sent_____ Result Step 4 - Home Call Date_____Made by:_____ Result

(Over)

Phase II

Date _____

_____Group Counseling

_____Individual Counseling

_____Class Change

_____Hours of Attendance Change

_____Complete Change of Program

_____Individual Testing

_____Alternative Program

_____Teacher Change

_____School Transfer

_____Psychological Referral

_____Medical Referral

_____Referral to Outside Agency

_____Other

APPENDIX C

FIVE DAY ABSENCE LETTER

COMPTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

604 SOUTH TAMARIND AVENUE, COMPTON, CALIFORNIA 90220 • (213) 537-2700 (213) 636-2263

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wendell T. Hardy, President
Manuel Correa, Vice President
Juanita S. Wilson, Clerk
Earl D. Johnson, Member
Michael Morris, Member
Lewis W. Roach, Member
Bettye R. Smith, Member

Acting Superintendent

Rodney S. Mahoney

Date_____

Re:_____

Dear Parent:

This is to inform you that the above named student has been absent from school for _____consecutive days.

Please call me at 639-4321, Ext. 263.

Sincerely,

Ms. Wilhelmina Ryan
Attendance

Appendix D

TEN DAY ABSENCE LETTER

COMPTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

604 SOUTH TAMARIND AVENUE, COMPTON, CALIFORNIA 90220 • (213) 537-2700 (213) 636-2263

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Wendell T. Hardy, President
Manuel Correa, Vice President
Juanita S. Wilson, Clerk
Earl D. Johnson, Member
Michael Morris, Member
Lewis W. Roach, Member
Bettye R. Smith, Member

Acting Superintendent
Rodney S. Mahoney

Date_____

Re:_____

Dear Parent:

We wish to advise you that the above named student has been absent from school for _____ consecutive days.

Therefore, a conference is requested. Please come in or call me at 639-4321, Ext. 263.

Your cooperation will ensure a continued education for your student.

Sincerely,

Ms. Wilhelmina Ryan
Attendance